“Flu” is an illness caused by a number of different influenza viruses that usually bear the name of the locality where they originated. Most college-age students are susceptible to the virus because of their proximity with others in classrooms, in residence halls, in the dining halls and elsewhere on campus. The influenza virus is very contagious and spreads easily in crowded areas by droplets of respiratory fluid that become airborne or by direct contact with recently contaminated surfaces.

If you are sick with flu symptoms, the CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

The best treatment for the flu is:

- **Rest** – with a temperature of 101° or above, outside activity should be reduced or curtailed. This also applies if you feel sick but your temperature is normal.
- **Acetaminophen** – 650 mg every 4-6 hours as needed not to exceed 3000mg/day or, **Ibuprofen** 400 mg every 6 to 8 hours for fever and body aches
- **Gargle** – with ½ tsp. of salt in 8 oz. of warm water for a sore throat (or any other over-the-counter mouthwash or gargle you prefer).
- **Drink** lots of fluids such as juices, water, carbonated beverages or tea
- **Antibiotics are not effective**
- **Cough syrup** if coughing interferes with sleep

You are most contagious from the day before your symptoms begin, through the period of prominent symptoms. Symptoms usually last a week, but coughing can persist for 3 to 4 weeks. You should go home if possible to avoid exposing others. If you remain in a dormitory, you may request that meals be brought to you. Ask the nurse for a request form and give it to your R.A.

**Symptoms generally have a sudden onset and include:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Symptoms (Begin 1-3 days after exposure)</th>
<th>Later Symptoms (By day 4)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fever &amp; chills – temperature commonly 102-103°F</td>
<td>Early symptoms are replaced by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Headache – usually pain behind eyes,</td>
<td>• Dry Cough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sensitivity to light</td>
<td>• Nasal Congestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aching muscles/joints – back, shoulder, limbs</td>
<td>• Sore Throat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General Sick Feeling – tired, loss of appetite, and may experience nausea &amp; vomiting</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**How Do You Reduce Transmission?**

- Wash hands frequently – [www.health.uri.edu/handwashing](http://www.health.uri.edu/handwashing)
- Cover mouth when coughing and sneezing
- Don’t share food or beverages during the flu

You should seek IMMEDIATE medical care if you have any of the following:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Recurring dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve, but then return with fever or worsening cough

**Contact Health Services at 401-874-2246 during normal business hours for the following:**

- For a temperature of 101 or greater lasting longer than 4 days
- Any symptoms lasting >5-7 days
- If you are experiencing a severe headache, rash or stiff neck
- Anytime you are concerned about your symptoms
- If you have questions

If symptoms persist beyond one week, if fever recurs after it has stayed down, or if you develop ear or chest pain, please return to Health Services or see your own health care provider. You may consult with a nurse at 401-874-2246.